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The Eastern Echo

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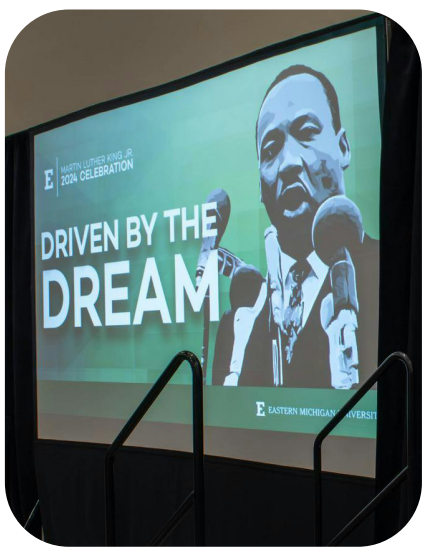
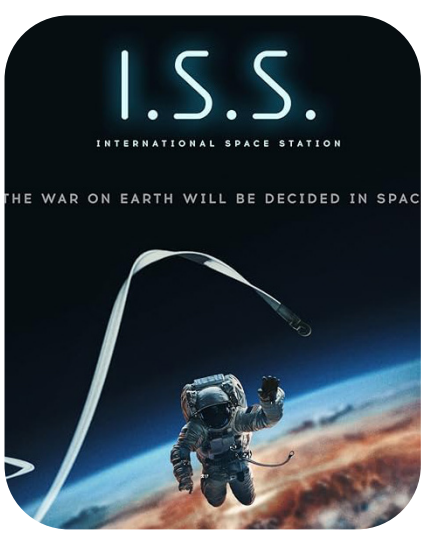
SPORTS: EMU men's hoops falls short to Ball State - *pg. 2*



GALLERY: Highlights from MLK Jr. celebrations - *pg. 3*



REVIEWS: 'I.S.S.' brings terror to the International Space Station - *pg. 4*

Former Judge Victoria Pratt visits EMU hoping to inspire the next generation

AARON HUGHES
MANAGING EDITOR

Eastern Michigan University on Monday, Jan. 15 hosted their annual Martin Luther King Jr. President's Luncheon as part of a week-long celebration called "Driven By The Dream." The speaker of this event was the professor, author, and former Chief Judge Victoria Pratt.

PHOTO CREDIT: KAIA TOLU
VICTORIA PRATT PRESENTS AT THE PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON ON JAN. 15 AS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER.

Known for her tenure as the chief judge in Newark Municipal Court in Newark, N.J., she was a known advocate of reforming the criminal justice system. Her method called procedural justice is an alternative method to jail for low-level offenders which includes assignments such as counseling, community service, and her most notorious method, introspective essays.

"Well, you think about people who never get the opportunity to express how they feel, what they've been through, and actually who never get an opportunity to sit down and stop and actually think about the answer to the question. And the answer to the question is oftentimes what people are looking for when they're in this cycle of the criminal justice system," Pratt said. "Sometimes I would have people say to me, 'how could you have them write essays?' And I would say to them, imagine how little I would have to think of them to think they didn't have a right to express their thoughts and feelings because of some limitation that I'm going to put on them," Pratt said.

In her Ted Talk, "How Judges Can Show Respect," she mentioned how being a judge was like having "a reserved seat to a tragic reality show." Despite this, she did not see any reason to stray from her approach and drive.

"I think that anything that you care about or passionate about or want to change, you should feel emotionally invested in it. And if you're not well, you should learn to move on to your passion. So I don't think that it is the only place that that would happen. But I think that when you are really committed to change and to service, it oftentimes feels like that. Right now I'm off the bench because the bench tends to not want you to speak," Pratt said.

Growing up as a talkative child, her parents believed she would become a lawyer one day. The Black and Latina daughter of an immigrant mother and garbageman in Harlem, Pratt cites her parents especially her mother as major influences in her life.

"There were no limitations. I would always say my mother let me fly even when she didn't understand what it was I was doing, especially since her English was very limited, but she trusted. She knew her child was going to try to do some different things," Pratt said. "There's a Baldwin quote that says, children learn the most by seeing what you do. I think that's probably one of the most powerful things for a child to really watch how their parents live. And my mother truly was a servant."

"When I saw myself on the bench behaving like her, I was like, wow. Literally taking things out of what I call her playbook," Pratt said. "I'm really my mother. If I can pour a quarter of what my mother poured into me, into my son I have done a great job."

Despite the far travel to Eastern, Pratt said she wanted to come to a place raising the next generation of leaders, hoping her story motivates others just as others in the past motivated her.

"I am so excited to be here. I was going through my book as I was preparing for today and I realized that like three to four quotes from Dr. King are in my book, and I hadn't even realized it because of how impactful, how he lived his life and what he required of us to do. So it is truly an honor to be able to come and speak here and share my experiences on the day that has been selected to honor him."

VICTORIA PRATT, AUTHOR OF THE POWER OF DIGNITY, SIGNS COPIES OF HER BOOK FOCUSED ON PROCEDURAL JUSTICE FOR ATTENDEES AT HER READING IN THE STUDENT CENTER ON JAN. 15.

Though she is "off the bench," Pratt still is active as an executive director at Odyssey Impact, and her consulting firm Pratt Lucien Consultants.

Local bookstore celebrates 10-year anniversary

JAMES DOERER
NEWS REPORTER

When walking inside the main entrance of Black Stone Bookstore & Cultural Center, there is a 50-yard-long hall to the left. This hallway is the shop. Books line the shelves from floor to ceiling, while the focal point of the room is a drawing titled "A King and Two Queens," a depiction two girls playing chess hung over bookshelves.

"They might not understand the power of playing chess now, but later down the line they will," Carlos Franklin, the shop owner, said.

The drawing, which was originally a photo by Franklin's wife, is of him and his two daughters. A friend created the drawing upon Franklin's request while Franklin was teaching his daughters to play. Franklin correlates the game of chess to long-term thinking and seduction versus acquiring power or putting people into corners.

"Having a long-term view allows a person to be in their world and not worried about everyone else's world," Franklin said.

Franklin's mindset is that long-term thinking is important in a business, but success also needs to be about your passions.

"I started selling books out of the back of my car because books were something I loved as my mind works differently than others," Franklin said. "Through this process I did not focus on acquiring. I focused on gaining skills because if this did not work out, I knew what I learned will lead me to my next adventure."

Black Stone Bookstore & Cultural Center is on West Michigan Avenue, a brick building down the street from Ypsilanti Library. Franklin and his co-owner Kip Johnson opened the store in 2013. The store survived the closing of brick-and-mortar bookstores as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Franklin credits that success to the relationships they built with customers.

"Our business model was built on not trying to grow the biggest customer base, but rather getting customers to keep coming back," Franklin said.

Franklin believes genuine relationships come from embracing your past mistakes and failures. The name Black Stone comes from a street gang in Chicago that Franklin could relate to as he was formerly a part of Gangster Disciples, another gang based in Chicago.

"When I was growing up, I used to be a part of GD (Gangster Disciples). When I left, I thought that was me changing my life, but when I embraced that part of me, I noticed the real change," Franklin said.

Franklin's testimony is embracing a part of himself that he once was embarrassed about.

"Embracing the name Black Stone allowed me to share my testimony of where I have been and challenge myself to be a better person to acknowledge the impact that part of my life had on me," Franklin said.

Reading is where Franklin learned the importance of seduction, which is all about understanding the mental side of a person and their psychology. Seduction represents long-term thinking and takes time to grow and develop. He takes the idea from the book "Art of Seduction" by Robert Greene, one of his favorites authors.

PHOTO CREDIT: JAMES DOERER
PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ARE CARLOS FRANKLIN'S FOUR-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, FRANKLIN HIMSELF, AND FRANKLIN'S SEVEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER.

The book teaches one how to understand what people truly desire and how to go after the things you want.

"Power is quick and hits real hard while seduction is over time," Franklin said. "A lot of time people see power coming and it is easy to defend it, but seduction is something that happens over time. And it is precise. So sometimes a person does not know they have even been seduced until you let them know."

Franklin realized the key to building a successful business was being the master of his world, focusing on his journey and not playing the comparison game.

"Everyone has their world and where we mess up is when we try to get into someone else's world. See, you are either going to be the puppet or puppet master because we are trying to impress somebody or be with somebody. You must be the master of your world," Franklin said.

Franklin is a big believer in the philosophy of going for it as he understands that chess and books are the same as acquiring vast knowledge. They plant seeds in a person's mind and you never know when you will use it.

"When you read something or see something, you never know the power it has on you until you need it. This is something that I stress to my daughters and one of the reasons I tell them to read. Books give you the knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in everyday life," Franklin said.

Franklin said kids will get back into reading when we allow them the choice to choose. Seduction is all about allowing people to come to conclusions on their own.

"Teachers and parents try to pick and choose what their kids are supposed to read instead of just guiding them. I read everything. I sat on the toilet and read the back of toilet paper," Franklin said. "It is more important that our kids read than what they read. Their interests will develop over time only if we allow our kids to choose."

This trend of forcing kids to read certain genres and books is what creates the current trend of fear and allowing others to control us, according to Franklin.

"Oftentimes we spend our lives as the puppet because when we do a job interview, they interview us, and we do not interview them. We must have belief in our understanding and ideals which is partially built through books," Franklin said.

The way Franklin approaches problems is what has allowed him to be confident in his journey and believe in himself.

"I do not see problems, I only see opportunities. My faith in Christ gives me a belief that even if I fail, my previous venture will set up me up for success for my next story," Franklin said. "When everybody moves fast, you got to make them slow down. Being precise with your strikes allows them to have a lasting effect."

There was a point during the COVID-19 pandemic where Franklin was unsure if the business would stay afloat, so he had to reinvent the business to keep it going.

"I never was an online guy because I wanted to focus on local customers specifically. I was okay with just having the local area support the business. But during the pandemic, we focused on shifting our store to online shopping while actively engaging with our customers online through our social media," Franklin said.

Their uniqueness in interacting with customers can be seen through the growth of their social media pages. Their Instagram account, which started just before the pandemic began, now has over 5,000 followers. Similar trends were seen with their Facebook and TikTok accounts.

"Every time customers buy a book, we have them take a picture with the book and post it on our website. We want customers to feel a sense of pride holding that book in their hands," Franklin said.

One of these customers is local real estate owner Candye Hinton, as she loves the selection of books available and the relationship she has built with one of the owners.

"Carlos is one of those people who always personalizes his selections for you. He sees you as a person, not as a dollar sign. He treats you the same regardless of whether you buy a book or not," Hilton said.

Hilton loves supporting small businesses near her because of the value they bring to the area as well as the importance to her clients.

"Having small businesses helps build a community as they are what makes towns special as they are individualized to them. Other business owners must recognize their business does better when surrounding small businesses last," Hilton said.

Black Stone Bookstore & Cultural Center is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is located at 214 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti, MI, 48197. Visitors can find "The Art of Seduction" on the middle shelf towards the door right under the drawing of Carlos Franklin and his two daughters.

What's the move? Jan. 22 - 28

SHANNON PARKER
NEWS REPORTER

Chemistry Seminar - Jan. 22

Learn about alternative fuels at "The Future and Chemistry of Alternative Fuels" seminar, hosted by Greg Johnson and Bill Henderson of ROUSH CleanTech. The seminar is free to attend and will take place in the Mark Jefferson Science Complex, room 171 from 4-5 p.m.

Open Basketball - Jan. 23

Had a busy or stressful first week of the semester? Blow off some steam on the court during open basketball in the REC/IM building from 5-9 p.m.

Professional Development Series: Job Search Optimization - Jan. 24

Ready to start looking for employment opportunities? Attend this professional development session to learn how to optimize your job search from 5-6 p.m. over Zoom. Join this remote session for free through a link provided on the EMU Today events calendar.

CORE Hot Cocoa Special - Jan. 25

Get involved on campus and meet the staff of EMU's Center of Race and Ethnicity with free hot chocolate. This event takes place in the Student Center, room 270 from 3-6 p.m.

Ping Pong Tournament - Jan. 27

Show off your ping pong skills in a tournament at the REC/IM building lounge from 1-4 p.m. The winner will receive an Intramural Champions t-shirt. Register online on the REC/IM Programs webpage.

Faculty and Guest Artist Dance Concert - Jan. 26 and 27

Support the arts at EMU! Attend the annual Faculty and Guest Dance Concert for a performance featuring four guest pieces and faculty dances by members of Company E, EMU's resident performing dance company. Both performances take place in the Pease Auditorium from 7-9 p.m. The cost to attend is $10, and tickets are available for purchase on emich.ludus.com.

YpsiWrites and EMU'S University Writing Center launch first campus-based Writer's Room

SHAYLA MOSTYN
NEWS REPORTER

On Thursday, Jan. 25, YpsiWrites and Eastern Michigan University's University Writing Center are launching the first campus-based Writer's Room in order to bring together all writers at EMU.

The Writer's Room at EMU will serve as a space for writers in the Ypsilanti community to gather and participate in writing workshops or simply work on their own creative writing. The idea for a Writer's Room originated from YpsiWrites, which is a non-profit, writing-focused organization that serves the Ypsilanti area.

"We had heard from students that they were looking for a space where they could do more creative writing, and we have a couple of GAs (graduate assistants) who took this on and brought it to campus," Kristine (Kristi) Gatchel, coordinator for the Halle Library location of the University Writing Center and Programs and Partnership Director for YpsiWrites, said.

Aside from YpsiWrites, EMU's University Writing Center serves as a resource for students to turn to for help with their writing. However, Patrick Flores-Scott, a GA at the writing center and EMU's campus Writer's Room co-coordinator, emphasizes that the Writer's Room is a place to write and be a writer, rather than strictly for writing help like in the Writing Center.

"When you're writing for class, you don't necessarily think of yourself as a writer," Flores-Scott said. "There is something in our development as a writer when we make that shift in thinking of ourselves as writers."

"We want it [the Writer's Room] to be a place where they can get support from their peers and get support from like-minded individuals," Sienna Higgins, a GA with the University Writing Center and co-coordinator for the campus Writer's Room, said. "A dedicated space away from the hustle and bustle."

The campus Writer's Room offers a flexible space. The whole time can be spent writing, discussing ideas with fellow peers, or however else they wish to utilize the meeting time. Whereas the Writer's Room is flexible, the Writing Center is more structured and offers students the chance to book a meeting with consultants and work with them one-on-one on their writing assignments; it is more for academic resources.

"We won't be giving as much structured feedback, we are going to encourage the students to provide feedback to each other as a peer and as a community versus a tutoring session," Higgins said.

With the emphasis on being student-run and set by their own expectations, students can participate in the Writing Room by simply showing up and engaging in the writing process.

"I really hope people understand how low stakes it is. No pressure to interact with others or share writing out loud," Higgins said. "If they just want to be there quietly, they can show up in the space as their most authentic self and write in the way that is best for them."

Eagletainment

Host Queso Tone (left) with guest Dillan Reed (center) and host Julez DeShetler (right)

New Episodes Weekly!

Soaring Eagles

Hosted by Sarai Yanes (left) with guest MaKayla Stevens.

SPORTS

EMU men's hoops falls short to Ball State

ELENA DAVIS
SPORTS WRITER

The story of the night inside the George Gervin GameAbove Center was the battle of the Jihad brothers as Eastern Michigan University's Yusuf Jihad (Farmington Hills, Mich.) went toe-to-toe with his younger brother from Ball State, Basheer Jihad (Detroit, Mich.). The Eagles would ultimately fall to the Cardinals, 76-72, and have now dropped their last three games.

Leading EMU with 21 points, Tyson Acuff (Detroit, Mich.) surpassed 1,000 career points as he currently sits at 1,015 points.

Ball State was 26-of-52 (50.0%) from the field and 7-of-19 (36.8%) from deep, while Eastern Michigan was 23-of-57 (40.4%) from the floor and 4-of-17 (23.5%) from three-point range.

Before Ball State established a 32-26 lead, the teams swapped leads for most of the first half. To cut the lead to three points at the half, Jihad hit a long triple for the Eagles.

An Acuff lay-up early in the second half put EMU ahead 39–38. Ball State then ran up to a 15–5 lead, which allowed the Cardinals to extend their lead to as much as 12 points before the game ended.

Playing the full 40 minutes, Acuff achieved this feat for the third time this season, completing the entire game. Acuff notched his 17th career game with 20 or more points.

Jalin Billingsley (Cleveland, Ohio) equaled his season best of 11 points and his career high of eight rebounds. On Dec. 1, against Lake Superior State, he scored 11 points.

The Eagles and Cardinals met for the 116th time during the game. Ball State is up in the series 45–71 in favor of EMU.

Next up, The Eagles are scheduled to travel to Ohio University in a 4 p.m. tip on Saturday, Jan. 20, as the game is preceded by the EMU women's basketball taking on OU at 1 p.m.

PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
TYSON SHOOTING THE FREE THROW.

#4 LEGEN GEETER IN A CONTESTED POSITION.

AN EMU PLAYER DUNKING ON THE BASKETBALL RIM.

ACUFF STANDING AND BEING BLOCKED BY BALL STATE.

Eastern Michigan hosts first Indoor Track and Field meet since 2020

HUGH THORP
SPORTS WRITER

The Eastern Michigan University Track and Field Programs hosted the Bob Parks Memorial meet on Saturday, Jan. 20, taking first place in four field events and topping eight track events.

The event was held at Bowen Field House on Eastern Michigan University's central campus, and it was the first time the event hosted an indoor meet since January 25, 2020.

The meet had seven schools participating outside of Eastern Michigan, which were Madonna University, the University of Windsor, Oakland University, the University of Detroit Mercy, the University of Toledo, Ball State University, and Bowling Green State University.

Field side

Eastern Michigan had a total of four first-place finishers on the field side of things. There were a total of 12 events in the field.

The first-place finishers included Formula Thompson (St. Catherine, Jamaica) producing a 7.46-meter long jump to best his competition by 0.24 meters, Brendan Hill (Huber Heights, Ohio) who had a 2.10-meter high jump, Micah Martin (Clinton Township, Mich.) with a 1.76-meter high jump, and Yvan Lopes Ribeiro (Nice, France) tallying 14.43-meter triple jump.

Track Side

On the track, the Eagles had control over the other seven schools they competed against. Being that there were 19 track events combined for the men and women, EMU had athletes take first place in seven of these.

The mile run for the women was one to remember for Faith Rono (Eldoret, Kenya), clocking a time of four minutes and 59 seconds to beat the field by one second and to break the five-minute mark, two seconds off of her personal best time for the one-mile distance of 4:57.

The Eagles had three runners break 5:10 in this distance out of the four runners who competed.

Some of the other first-place runners for Eastern Michigan were Kian Wiles (Hull, England) with a 4:10-mile, Lopes Ribeiro with a 7.92-second 60-meter hurdles time, Saraiah Walkes (Manatee County, Fla.) with a 7.47-second 60-meter dash, George Gage (Pontiac, Mich.) with a 49.02-second 400-meter time, and Josephine Oloye (Iwaro-Oka, Nigeria) with a 57.13-second 400-meter time to help the Eagles sweep both the men's and women's side of the quarter-mile distance.

The other first-place finishers were Paige Merchant (London, Ontario) with a 2:09.37 800, Sam Peterson (Charlevoix, Mich.) with an 8:29.51 3000-meter, and the women's A team for the 4x400 meter relay, finishing the mile team race in three minutes and 50 seconds.

Big Picture

All schools who participated brought a good crowd and largely filled up the bleachers in the old-time fieldhouse. Bowen holds around 5,000 people, and there were not many open seats in the bleachers.

This was the fourth indoor meet of the season for Eastern Michigan and their second since the calendar flipped to 2024. Highlights on the upcoming schedule include traveling to places such as the University of Notre Dame, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Arkansas, as well as the local University of Michigan.

There are four more indoor meets before the MAC Championships which take place at Bowen Field House on Feb. 23 and 24.

PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
THE GYMNASTICS TEAM CELEBRATES TOGETHER AFTER A GYMNAST PERFECTED THEIR EVENT ON JAN. 19.

JORDAN JANKOWSKI APPROACHING THE BALANCE BEAM AT THEIR MEET ON JAN. 19.

Eagle Sports Tips and Tales

BLAKE MCQUEARY
SPORTS EDITOR

EMU Athletics officially opens GameAbove Golf Performance Center

The Eastern Michigan University golf program will have a new place to test the green as a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Tuesday, Jan. 16, at the brand new GameAbove Golf Performance Center.

The new facility located at Eagle Crest Golf Club comes from an $8 million gift from GameAbove that includes locker rooms, meeting spaces, indoor putting and chipping greens, and cutting-edge simulators to stand as a training environment and contributor to elevate athletes' game.

GameAbove is a team of EMU alumni who give back to the University's community and athletic programs. Over the years, GameAbove has donated more than $30 million to the University. This project was dedicated to longtime EMU golf coach Bruce Cunningham.

EMU men's and women's hoops suffer losses in Athens, Ohio

Both the Eastern Michigan University men's and women's basketball programs took losses on Saturday, Jan. 20, in Athens, Ohio, to Ohio University.

The men's squad would fall to the Bobcats, 85-67, as the Eagles fell to 8-10 on the season, while Ohio improved to 9-9 overall.

Junior guard Tyson Acuff (Detroit, Mich.) finished with a game-high 30 points for the Eagles, as it marked his sixth career game with 30+ points.

While Senior center Kennedi Myles (Cincinnati, Ohio) finished the game with a double-double as she notched 16 points and 11 rebounds. It marked her 13th career double-double.

Next up, the EMU women's basketball team will travel to Kent, Ohio, for a date with the Kent State Golden Flashes on Wednesday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. while the men's team will take on intrastate rival Western Michigan on Tuesday, Jan. 23, at 7 p.m.

EMU tennis suffers loss to Northwestern in 2024 season opener

The Eastern Michigan University tennis team opened up its 2024 campaign on Saturday, Jan. 20, in Evanston, Ill., as they took on Northwestern University inside the Combe Tennis Center.

The Eagles would drop the season opener by a 7-0 decision as they now fell to 0-1 on the season while Northwestern improved to 3-0 overall.

The Wildcats would earn wins in the No. 1 and No. 2 matches as they took the doubles points, while EMU's Daniella Shved (Holon, Israel) and Andrea Quiroz (Lima, Peru) would tie the Wildcats, 4-4, in the No. 3 match.

Singles wouldn't go the way the Eagles had hoped as the Wildcats would take all six matches to claim a 7-0 win on the day.

Saturday's dual marked the first for the Eagles under first-year head coach Ryan Kucera.

Around The Community

PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY

EMU PROFESSOR DR. AARON LIEPMAN PRESENTS HIS THIRD MLK-THEMED LEGO MOSAIC TITLED "WALK TO FREEDOM." THE LEGO MOSAIC, UNVEILED ON JAN. 15, SITS IN THE STUDENT CENTER GALLERY.

PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY

THE PEP BAND PLAYS AT THE MLK EMU MEN'S BASKETBALL GAME V. BALL STATE ON JAN. 16.

PHOTO CREDIT: MADISON CANTRELL

ATHENA JOHNSON, VOCALIST, JOINS SEAN DOBBINS' "ALL LIVES STAND UP" AT THE YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY ON JAN. 14.

PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY

JUDGE VICTORIA PRATT DURING HER INTERVIEW ON JAN. 15.

PHOTO CREDIT: MADISON CANTRELL

EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ON VIEW IN THE STUDENT CENTER GALLERY.

PHOTO CREDIT: KAIA TOLU

ATTENDEES AT THE PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON CELEBRATING MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. LISTEN TO SPEAKERS AS THEY SHARE THEIR CONNECTION TO THE ANNUAL THEME OF "DRIVEN BY THE DREAM" ON JAN. 15.

PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY

THE ARTIFACTS IN THE MLK EXHIBIT IN THE STUDENT CENTER GALLERY.

PHOTO CREDIT: MADISON CANTRELL

A CHILD PLAYS MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AND RECITES KING'S "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH AT EMU'S "A NIGHT OF DREAMS" CONCERT ON JAN. 18.

PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY

THE MLK COMMITTEE AT THE ART EXHBIT REVEAL ON JAN. 15 AT THE STUDENT CENTER GALLERY.

Check out more reviews of new movies on the Echo website!

Review: 'I.S.S.' brings terror to the International Space Station

FRANK REMSKI
COLUMNIST

In the geopolitical equivalent of a custody battle, who would gain control of the International Space Station, the United States or Russia? This is the premise of the film "I.S.S." a spacefaring thriller that was released in theaters on Jan. 19.

The film stars Ariana DeBose, Chris Messina, John Gallagher Jr., Maria Maskova, Costa Ronin, and Pilou Asbæk as a group of astronauts on the I.S.S. when the U.S. and Russia begin a nuclear war. Both governments order their astronauts to take over the space station—by any means necessary.

The film was directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite. She previously directed the 2013 documentary "Blackfish" which exposed SeaWorld's abuse of orcas. Though she has directed fiction films before, "I.S.S." is her first science fiction thriller.

Highs

The thrills are not cheap jumpscares. Instead the film slowly builds tension and suspense as the astronauts slowly descend into desperation and their trust erodes. It is an uneasy watch that only becomes more suspenseful as it goes.

The cinematography expertly builds suspense. The space station is crammed and tight, making it feel suffocating. When the scenes are outside of the station, space is an uncanny, uncaring monster. The station is massive compared to the astronauts and strangely lit when compared to the backdrop, a dark void.

Terror is added when the camera pans to earth. Beginning the film as the earth we know, as the movie progresses the world literally burns and becomes more catastrophic and devastating with every new shot.

The special effects make the film all the more impressive. The entire plot takes place on a space station with zero gravity. Characters make complicated movements and stunts that make the movie seem as if it was actually filmed in space. Together, the special effects and cinematography make the imagery eye-catching and memorable.

With the closed spaces, the actors' faces are emphasized. The movie is intimate, adding to the terror as the character's own terror is up front and personal.

Lows

The film struggles with logic. The premise already demands a high level of disbelief as the I.S.S. is dedicated to science, it doesn't make sense strategically to demand one side take it. The film does offer an explanation for this towards the end, but has several other logical problems.

Certain twists don't make sense, leading to plot holes. This undermines the suspense as characters and governments often make their choices based on what the plot wants, not their own motivations. It breaks the ability to suspend disbelief when all the plot holes, inconsistencies, and unexplained reasonings add up.

The characters' weaknesses are especially present with the Russians. Despite both the American and Russian astronauts receiving the same orders, only the Russian ones actually follow them. The film leans on the trope of evil, untrustworthy Russians.

Never once do the Americans follow their orders, only ever backstabbing anyone (literally backstabbing) for personal reasons. The Russian characters in general are underdeveloped, the film favoring the backstories and motives of the Americans.

Verdict

Visually, "I.S.S." is an incredible thriller that brings out the horror of space with its cinematography. However, the plot holes and underdeveloped characters hinder the film from going beyond its atmosphere.

"I.S.S." is currently playing in theaters.

Rating: 6 out of 10 stars.

Frank Remski is a film and theater reviewer for the Eastern Echo. He is majoring in media studies and journalism and minoring in public relations. He has worked for The Echo since the summer of 2023 and has written both news stories and opinion pieces.

Review: 'Founder's Day' produces more comedy than horror

MARIAM FAKHREDDINE
COLUMNIST

"Founder's Day" was opened to limited theaters on Friday, Jan. 19. This semi-slasher movie was more comedic than anything. It was an off-brand Scream movie because there was a killer on the loose that was completely unknown. It was thrilling to see who was the killer; it was unexpected.

Synopsis

Days before a contentious mayoral election, a small town has been devastated by several frightening killings. It is a race against time for the locals to find the truth as allegations erupt and the threat of a masked killer comes closer with each passing day. The current mayor Blair Gladwell (Amy Hargreaves) is up for re-election against Harold Faulkner (Jayce Bartok). The bad blood between these two candidates is horrific.

Both candidates are too arrogant and ambitious to make good parents. Harold berates his son Adam (Devin Druid) and opposes his teen daughter Melissa's (Olivia Nikkanen) same-sex romantic relationship with classmate Allison (Naomi Grace). Adam has recently gone through a traumatic breakup with Emilia McCarthy's character, Blair's daughter, Lilly.

Her mother the mayor is distracted by Rob (Tyler James White), Lilly's new bad boyfriend, and forbids her to see him. Blair is also too busy worrying about the mayor's re-election to notice her child's pain. The majority of these high school students work at the neighborhood theater, which will inevitably soon serve as a single location for deadly conflict.

One night, when Allison and Melissa are trying to escape the overall commotion by going for a walk, they are approached by a terrifying man dressed in an outdated judicial wig and mask similar to Guy Fawkes. This is only the beginning of a murderous rampage that the candidates promptly use for their political advantage, even after members of their own families are killed.

Highs

This movie had little highs because it was not as good as anticipated. The killer's costume was pretty scary, and the weapon as a judge's gavel that has a knife inside of it was impressive. The killer was hard to pinpoint because the certain students dying were violently handled. The cop, Commissioner Peterson (Catherine Curtin), was a hilarious aspect; every time she discovered a murder, there was always a lollipop in her mouth. She had a sarcastic personality that made the audience laugh. Her acting was spot on if it was supposed to be a comedic character.

Next, the acting of Allison's father, Thomas Chambers (Andrew Stewart-Jones), as a concerned yet light-warming father was perfect. He would do anything to protect his daughter and they had a stable relationship, unlike the other students with their parents. He did a great job protecting his daughter in certain instances. Mr. Jackson, the teacher played by William Russ, had a sympathetic and humorous acting style. He was involved within the circle of the mayor's committee and the teacher at the high school. He was close to Allison and cared for her as a student because he thought she was brilliant.

The town's scenes were ideal for the era of the film; it depicted a normal small town with a sheriff. Even though it was predicted, the scenes where the murderer was gathering his victims were nevertheless unsettling. Particularly, the situation in the movie theater was the most striking.

Lows

The students' acting wasn't the best; rather, it was mostly comical. Harold, Adam and Melissa's father, was so emotionally detached from his daughter's death that it was difficult to take him seriously. He ought to have responded more as a father, instead of continuing to concentrate on defeating Blair in the mayoral race. Melissa's performance was also poor; she just came across as more insane than cunning.

In the parts where the murderer was present, in particular, Allison struggled with fear. Her demeanor was half confused most of the time, and she didn't exhibit the typical sadness at her girlfriend's death. She gave her teacher her homework, even though the person she truly cared about died.

This was just another corny scary film that has been done before. In addition, there were moments in this film when the viewer felt as though the mayor's committee was involved in some questionable activity, but they never truly explained it to the viewers. One scene in particular, set during a Saturday detention, was overly excessive and should not have been included in the film. There ought to have been another option to pursue the target's precise murder.

Verdict

This is more of a humorous horror movie, thus it wasn't the best horror movie. It could have worked better, in my opinion, with different actors or a less typical scenario.

Rating: 5 out of 10.

Mariam Fakhreddine is a film and theater reviewer for The Eastern Echo. She has worked as a news and features reporter for The Echo for two years.

Review: 'Jamie All Over' is revamped with less yelling and more vibing

KASPER MIELKE
COLUMNIST

Rock music is great, and emo-rock music is even better. However, sometimes it does not fit every mood. Not many people want to headbang or cry while they are sleeping or studying. That is where low-fidelity music comes in, otherwise known as lofi.

Background

"Jamie All Over" is one of Mayday Parade's most well-known songs in their career. It has paved the way for other bands in their genre. In this version, they collaborated with Less Gravity and Aleks, both known for their lofi beats and use of electronic instruments, to turn this hot emo-track into something more palatable for the faint of ear. This song is a part of Mayday Parade's upcoming lofi EP.

Musical Overview

In comparison to the original track, this variation has a specific feel that it is going for. While the 2007 hit makes its mark using harsh instrumental and edgy lyrics, its 2024 counterpart is best recognized as something that is meant to be zoned out to. One version is meant to be screamed to, the other is meant to be slept to.

The good thing about lofi music is that it does not need to be overly complex to get its motive across. Sometimes it really is just the little things. That being said, like every song in existence, this is not going to be something that everyone vibes with.

Contrary to what was said before, there are some people who would rather fall asleep or study to someone yelling angsty lyrics into their ear. Another reason that someone might not like a song like this is because it is not the original, but in the same breath, that is the point of a track like this.

Verdict

This song is a 9 out of 10.

Kasper Mielke is a music reviewer for the Eastern Echo. He is a women and gender studies major with a minor in creative writing. He has worked for The Echo since the summer of 2022, and has stuck to writing music reviews.

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